



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2019

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Environmental Protection Commission to meet Jan. 23 in Des Moines

MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Sheets at 515-313-8909 or Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES – The Environmental Protection Commission will meet at 1 p.m., Jan. 23, in the auditorium on the second floor of the Wallace State Office Building Auditorium, 502 E. Ninth St. in Des Moines.

The commission's business meeting follows the annual joint meeting with the Natural Resources Commission, scheduled for 10 a.m. in the second floor north conference room of the Wallace building. Both meetings are open to the public.

Each commission will share highlights from 2018 at the joint meeting, followed by updates on current topics.

At the EPC business meeting, DNR will present the fiscal year 2018 annual report and budget for the Environmental Management System Program—projects that leverage

local funding with grants to improve solid waste stewardship. Commissioners will hear success stories from two of the 13 participants.

Commissioners will also be asked to approve a contract with the city of Clear Lake for a watershed project in Cerro Gordo and Hancock counties.

Please submit written comments to Jerah Sheets at Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov or call 515-313-8909, or by mail to DNR, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319 by noon the day before the meeting.

The complete agenda follows:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Monthly Reports

Acting Director's Remarks

Environmental Management System Program Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report

Contract with City of Clear Lake for the CLEAR Watershed Project

General Discussion

Items for Next Month's Meeting

- 19 – EPC Business Meeting – Des Moines
- March 19 – EPC Business Meeting – Des Moines

The complete [agenda and item briefs](#) are available on the DNR website.

Commissioners include: Ralph Lents, Menlo, chair; Joe Riding, Altoona, vice chair; Rebecca Guinn, Bettendorf, Secretary; Mary Boote, Des Moines; Nancy Couser, Nevada; Lisa Gochenour, Logan; Howard Hill, Cambridge; Harold Hommes, Windsor Heights; and Bob Sinclair, Sigourney. Bruce Trautman is the acting director of the DNR.

Any person attending the public meeting and has special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments should contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov, and advise of specific needs.

Water quality improvements lead to mussels' return, Lime Creek off state impaired waters list

MEDIA CONTACT: Steve Hopkins, 515-725-8390 or Jennifer Kurth, 515-725-8381.

BUCHANAN COUNTY — For Lime Creek, it's a tale of two lists; it's a story that moves from the state's impaired waters list to the distinction of landing on the Outstanding Iowa Waters list. The effort was also just recognized as a water quality success story by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The move took the work of the local Buchanan County community, and all hinged on the return of one valuable stream resident.

A survey of native freshwater mussel species in the creek in 1984 found nine different species. But by 1998 there were no live mussels found. With that, one segment of the stream was considered impaired for biological aquatic life.

Locals formed the Lime Creek Watershed Council and launched a watershed project in 2006, aiming to reduce the amount of silt and sediment washing off the land into the creek, as well as reducing the amount of phosphorus and nitrates reaching the water.

The project focused on helping farmers and landowners use practices on the land to better hold sediment and nutrients on the land and keep them out of the creek. With a number of partners and funding sources, including the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the project helped locals reduce tillage, adjust crop rotations, change nutrient application and install grassed waterways.

More than half of residents in the Lime Creek watershed – the area of land that drains to the creek – participated in the project. After the project officially ended in 2009, locals kept it alive with voluntary practices and efforts.

"Year after year, we've seen interest growing in cover crops and in other practices that improve soil health and water quality," said farmer and conservation leader Dick Sloan of Rowley, who leads the Lime Creek Watershed Council.

As a result, 959 tons of sediment – that's about 64 dump truck loads – no longer reach the creek each year. The work also reduced phosphorus levels in the creek by almost 1,500 pounds per year and nitrate-nitrogen levels in the creek dropped 19 percent.

Most importantly, because of the improved habitat, the mussels returned. A Statewide Mussel Survey in 2011, led by the DNR and funded by U.S. EPA Section 319,

discovered six species of mussels where there were previously none. That includes three species considered threatened in Iowa.

“It’s especially impressive that the most common mussel we found in Lime Creek, the ellipse, is a threatened mussel,” said DNR biologist Jen Kurth, who led the survey. This led to Lime Creek coming off of the state’s impaired waters list in 2014.

Now, as one of Iowa’s Outstanding Waters, this scenic stretch of stream is well-known to visitors to Buchanan County Conservation’s Lime Creek Park and to smallmouth bass anglers in the area.

To learn more about Lime Creek and its success story, visit the U.S. EPA’s website: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/success-stories-about-restoring-water-bodies-impaired-nonpoint-source-pollution#ia>

Manure release west of Winterset ended

MEDIA CONTACT: Jeff Theobald at 515-725-0373 or Jeff.Theobald@dnr.iowa.gov

WINTERSET—An ongoing manure release discovered Jan. 9 four miles west of Winterset ended over the Jan. 12 to 13 weekend.

The site owners, Waldo Farms of Nebraska, pumped out and land applied manure from a closed hog confinement.

Initially DNR staff found a release from an active hog confinement at the same site, but manure was not reaching a nearby tributary of Cedar Creek. During the investigation, however, they discovered high ammonia levels in the creek below the confinement, eventually tracing it to a small ongoing release from the closed facility.

DNR monitored the cleanup, visiting the site on Jan. 11 and 14. Field tests showed elevated ammonia levels in the tributary, but there was no sign of a fish kill or other adverse impacts to the tributary.

DNR will continue to monitor the cleanup and consider appropriate enforcement action.

2019 Derelict Building Grant applications due February 21

DNR Contact: Scott Flagg, 515-725-8318 or Scott.Flagg@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES – The next round of funding for the 2019 Derelict Building Grant Program is open for applications through Feb. 21 at 4 p.m.

The grant program was instituted by state legislation to help rural communities with populations of 5,000 or less to deconstruct or renovate abandoned commercial and public structures.

The program emphasizes reuse and recycling of building items, helps improve street appearance and commercial development, and alleviates the environmental concern these buildings can pose. Financial assistance includes asbestos removal, building deconstruction and renovation, and other environmental services.

Funding is awarded annually on a competitive basis. A committee from the Iowa DNR, Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations, Iowa Recycling Association, Iowa Economic Development Authority and Keep Iowa Beautiful selects the projects for funding. For more information and to obtain an application on the Derelict Building Grant Program, contact Scott Flagg at 515-725-8318 or Scott.Flagg@dnr.iowa.gov.

DNR holding public hearings on fifth batch of stream use designation revisions for Iowa streams

MEDIA CONTACT: Matthew Dvorak, DNR, 515-725-8397
or matthew.dvorak@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES – The DNR is holding public hearings across the state to gather input on proposed designated use changes for a fifth batch of select rivers and streams. The changes in this proposed rule will help protect aquatic life and recreational uses.

For a list of stream designations being revised in the water quality standards, please refer to the list posted at: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Water-Quality-Standards>

The DNR will host three public hearings throughout Iowa to hear comments on this rule proposal. Any interested person is welcome to attend. Meetings will be held as follows,

listed by town:

Urbandale: Feb. 12, 4 p.m., Urbandale Public Library, Meeting Room B, 3520 86th St.

Washington: Feb. 13, 4 p.m., Washington Public Library, Nicola-Stoufer Room, 115 W. Washington St.

Harlan: Feb. 14, 4 p.m., Harlan Community Library, 718 Court St.

People may make oral or written comments at any of the public hearings. Written comments will also be accepted through Feb. 22. Send written comments to: Matthew Dvorak, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319-0034; or by e-mail to matthew.dvorak@dnr.iowa.gov.

Air Quality permits under review

MEDIA CONTACT: Lori Hanson, DNR, at 515-725-9525
or Lori.Hanson@dnr.iowa.gov for Title V permits.

DES MOINES – The DNR Air Quality Bureau has the following draft permits up for review. The permits help protect Iowans' health and the air where we live. DNR's permitting staff review the applications to ensure facilities comply with state and federal air quality standards. The public has the right and is encouraged to comment on draft permits. DNR considers [public comments](#) before finalizing the permits. Submit comments in writing to the assigned permit writer before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the public comment period.

Title V Operating Permits

Title V Operating permits are reviewed and re-issued every five years. Facilities with a Title V permit have the potential to emit large amounts of air pollutants compared to other facilities. The five-year reviews are a federal requirement and ensure adequate monitoring is included in the permit. The DNR plans to issue Title V Operating Permits for the following facilities. Find permit details at www.iowadnr.gov/titlev-draft.

Linn County IPL-Prairie Creek Generating Station – 3300 C St. SW, Cedar Rapids. The renewal application was submitted to operate their existing fossil fuel electric power generation facility. The public comment period ends Feb. 15.